



National Park Service
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Decision is Withdrawn for Cellular Site Permit on John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

Grand Teton National Park Acting Superintendent, Steve Iobst, announced that the decision made in May to permit a cellular site on Steamboat Mountain in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway was withdrawn on Friday, July 13, by National Park Service Regional Director Karen Wade. Wade withdrew the decision so that further study on the suitability of lands for wilderness inclusion on the Parkway, and further analysis of land suitability for cellular site installations could be made.

Iobst notes that the 2001 National Park Service Management Policies require national parks to make a determination about the suitability of certain lands for wilderness before any activities take place in them that would compromise wilderness character. Iobst further states that it is in the interest of the public and NPS to clarify the direction that exists in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway General Management Plan.

The proposal to build a cellular site was made by Union Telephone and Commnet Cellular, and an Environmental Assessment was published for public review on May 12, 2000. During the EA process, the issue of potential wilderness on the Parkway was dismissed since it had not been part of the Park's wilderness recommendation during study work conducted in the 1970s. The Park also has not included areas of the Parkway as potential wilderness additions in subsequent recommendations, updates or statements for management. However, the NPS inadvertently overlooked the necessity, under the 2001 policy, to perform wilderness suitability studies of Parkway lands in rendering the decision. Following the new analysis, lands that are deemed suitable for wilderness will then not be considered suitable for the location of cellular facilities.

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